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Claremont McKenna College

The Demandingness of Morality: Our Person Confined

submitted to
Professor Schroeder

by
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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction	
	Moral Beneficence on Us	1
Chapter 2	The Demandingness of Morality	
	2.1 Williams: The Integrity Objection and Utilitarianism	7
	What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?	12
	2.2 Scheffler: The Agent-Centred Prerogative	14
	What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?	18
	2.3 Murphy: Change in Compliance and the Cooperative Principle	21
	What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?	27
	2.4. Miller: The Principle of Sympathy and Personal Policies	29
	What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?	36
Chapter 3	Morality's Domain of Beneficence and Our Person	
	The Demandingness of Morality on Our Person	38
Bibliography		51

1. Introduction

Moral Beneficence on Us

Harm and suffering are bad things to cause. You can agree that you do not want to be responsible for causing it directly nor would you want to be responsible for contributing to it indirectly. You would not starve your kids, say, because you did not have any more food in the fridge and could not afford more for the three more days. You do not want to cause harm and suffering like this when you know you can do something to prevent the situation. Chances are you are going to go next door, downstairs, upstairs, somewhere, to find a small donation from someone. And the person donating food to you does not want to contribute to your kids' harm and suffering, so of course she will donate some food. This chain of events shows that harm and suffering are bad things to cause, contribute to, and experience and you and any other rational person know harm and suffering are bad.

Now suppose there are nine million people at risk of dying in massive amounts every day because of starvation. Would you like to do something that can prevent these people from dying? Your first reaction would probably be, "wow, nine million people at risk of dying is outrageous and alarming!" so yes, you would like to do something if it means preventing the deaths of as many people as possible. Every single person is entitled to their life. It is horrible that people who are at risk of dying because of starvation are going through a struggle alone. The world is a better and easier place if we can depend on someone else in times of struggle. Because we know that harm and suffering are bad and that many of us are in a position to prevent harm and suffering, we would like to do something about it. The same concept applies if your kids were starving

because you could not afford any more food. Because your neighbor knows harm and suffering are bad and is in a position to better the situation, she is willing to do something about it. Without being willing to do something about the situation, we become part of the problem.

If we are in a state of good intentions, willing to prevent bad things from happening, why do we not just do what we are willing to do? If we are willing to donate food to our neighbor to prevent harm and suffering there, we should be willing to donate food or money to prevent harm and suffering for nine million people. We should be responding and acting in ways that adhere to our serious level of concerns for the nine million people at risk of dying. We should donate the most we can to international aid agencies. One way is to sacrifice all the things we do not really need fashionable clothing, luxurious appliances, the newest electronics, a huge house, and an expensive car. How is it right to consume all of the things that buy us our ideal lifestyles when we should be lending our resources and energies to the nine million people we are seriously concerned about. We should be sacrificing all of these things to have more money left over to donate to international aid agencies to provide these people their most basic needs, health, and life stability. Certainly these are major sacrifices but they are sacrifices that adhere to our severe level of concerns for others. But even though these major sacrifices adhere to our level of concerns for others and we are all willing to do something to prevent harm and suffering, we have a problem with actually lending ourselves to prevent harm and suffering like this. What are we at odds with to refrain from preventing harm and suffering like this? We must have something to do with the

morality in caring for others and furthering their interests whenever necessary – moral beneficence.

Let me illustrate Peter Singer's advocacy for preventing harm and suffering through great sacrifice. I describe his position on the issue somewhat through my depiction of what we should do if we are seriously concerned for the lives of nine million people starving, but describing his position in depth of what we should do will help frame what we are at odds with. Singer introduces his Principle of Sacrifice which is a derivative of the principle of beneficence. The principle of beneficence basically states that people should be concerned for others and further their interests when necessary to do so. The Principle of Sacrifice, in particular, states, "if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it"¹. It is undeniable that a majority of us have the power to prevent something bad from happening, especially when we are already willing to do so; but in doing so, it is just critical that we need not sacrifice anything that is of comparable moral importance. Consider, again, your neighbor donating food to you. Your neighbor should donate it because she does not sacrifice anything of comparable moral importance, but somehow if donating the food meant her father dying then she should not donate it.

At any rate, Singer is concerned about large real world problems like starvation, poverty, natural disaster, disease, internal conflict, and more. He ultimately argues that we should all be sacrificing our benefits from a consumer-based society in order to

¹ Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 231.

respond effectively to the needs of others, for this grants us the power to be in a position to prevent harm and suffering from happening. Namely, this puts us in the position to donate money to international aid agencies so they can provide aid to the sizeable problems Singer and the rest of us are concerned about. Indulging in consumption is not of comparable moral importance as is preventing harm and suffering for millions. This is why it is wrong to not donate money, because granted that we are in a position to prevent harm and suffering from happening by sacrificing our benefits from a consumer-based society, we should be. We ought to help regardless of our proximity to these problems and of the fact that other people can provide more than us. These are not reasonable excuses to refrain from sacrificing our resources and energies. Singer's standards for world beneficence are very high and expects more than just people's charity. His standards for world beneficence are such that we ought to always further the interests of others until we sacrifice something that is of comparable moral importance, otherwise, any inadequate actions are condemnable.

Peter Singer's ideal world depicts a reality where moral beneficence for others requires us to fulfill extreme demands. Although his Principle of Sacrifice derives from the principle of beneficence, his principle requires more out of agents than would the principle of beneficence alone. It requires agents to further the interests of others *until* they are sacrificing something of comparable moral importance and to *always* produce the overall good. Whether producing the overall good is to maximize the most happiness, benefit, or satisfaction or to produce the most value in humanity, doing so requires us to fulfill extreme demands as illustrated. Assuming Singer's Principle of Sacrifice were in effect and we end starvation for nine million people, it would expect us to act on the next

project and the one after that to end other forms of harm and suffering. We are required to always produce the overall good, and harm and suffering are unpredictable and rampant throughout the world. We are not wrong for being seriously concerned for others when they are in desperate need nor for being willing to do something about it, but the amount of sacrifice needed to compensate for our level of concerns and fix the problem at hand is too great for us to bear.

There must be something about the morality in caring for others and furthering their interests whenever necessary – moral beneficence – that we are at odds with. But why are we at odds with moral beneficence when the benefits of caring for others and furthering their interests are enormous? The answer: morality is too demanding. Morality's requirements stockpile if all we are expected to do is move onto the next project and the one after that in order to prevent all forms of harm and suffering. Having to always produce the overall good until we sacrifice something of comparable moral importance is a never-ending job that confines us to only producing the overall good with no kind of devotion to ourselves.

So I raise the question: why is morality too demanding? Specifically, what makes it too demanding? The answers to these questions vary and are open for discussion. There is no single and truthful answer that can understand the demandingness of morality and appease the perplexity of what makes morality too demanding. In light of the challenge to answer what makes morality too demanding, notable philosophers who have analyzed the demandingness of morality are Bernard Williams, Samuel Scheffler, Liam Murphy, and Richard W. Miller. They all present unique arguments that demonstrate how the demandingness of morality affects agents who are always acting to produce the overall

good. I will evaluate each of their arguments in the next chapter and based off their arguments I will discuss in depth what makes a moral theory too demanding to them.

For brevity, Williams suggests that what makes a moral theory is too demanding is that it is unacceptable for a moral theory to detach agents from their aspiration of who they want to be. Scheffler suggests a moral theory is too demanding if it prevents people from realizing a greater role for their own person that goes beyond only producing the overall good. Murphy suggests a moral theory is too demanding when it becomes unfair to require people to acquire an excess of demands to fulfill because others do not fulfill theirs. And lastly, Miller suggests that what makes a moral theory too demanding is when a moral theory does not accommodate the very fundamental features that contribute to the wellbeing of a person's life.

Each philosopher's view of what makes morality too demanding implicates that the demandingness of morality puts people at risk of completely forfeiting their identity, autonomy, and values. For the remainder of this thesis it will be important to conceptualize that people's identity, autonomy, and values are encapsulated into the idea of their person. After I discuss what makes a moral theory too demanding for each of these philosophers in the next chapter, I will connect their views to each other to note differences and commonalities they have with each other in the third chapter. This will ultimately provide a good framework for me to develop and present my own argument of what makes a moral theory too demanding.

2. The Demandingness of Morality

2.1 Williams: *The Integrity Objection and Utilitarianism*

Consequentialism requires agents to act the action available to them that will produce the best state of affairs. Utilitarianism, in particular, requires agents to act on prescribed choices of actions that will maximize the most happiness, benefit, or satisfaction. As utilitarianism dictates what prescribed choice of action agents should take to produce the best state of affairs, it does not consider what agents would do on their own terms. Bernard Williams frames this lack of consideration in moral situations as a major problem agents face. He argues that having to act on prescribed choices of actions alienates agents from their own projects and as a result utilitarianism undermines agents' integrity towards their projects. Williams draws the notion of negative responsibility that extends from consequentialism and applies it in utilitarian moral situations to demonstrate that agents in fact do become alienated from their projects and get their integrity undermined.

It will be helpful to first review what consequentialism is interested in to understand how Williams draws the notion of negative responsibility from it. Williams states that consequentialism is "indifferent to whether a state of affairs consists in what I do or, or is produced by what I do... All that consequentialism is interested in is the idea of these doings being *consequences* of what I do"². The consequences that Williams refers to are causations of what I do. A state of affairs results from consequences of what I do because I cause them to be the consequences from my actions or inactions. Further,

² Bernard Williams, "Negative responsibility: two examples," in *Utilitarianism: for and against*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 93. This chapter used can be found inside Williams' section *A critique of utilitarianism*.

Williams says all agents are causally related because their actions and even inactions cause a state of affairs that affect someone else. All agents have access to a state of affairs by their own actions or inactions and thus are causally related to each other.

Furthermore, it is also possible for some remote agent's action or inaction to cause the original agent to change his choice of action he would have originally acted on without the remote agent's intervention. Maybe you would have voted for a democratic president but some guest speaker at your college inspired you to vote for a republic president instead. A state of affairs could be a consequence of someone's own action or inaction or a consequence of someone else's intervention causing the original person choice of action. In a moral situation, it matters a lot what an agent does to produce the best state of affairs, and the intervention of a remote agent can seriously influence what the original agent will do in that moral situation. Consider you have a friend who wants to key scratch your neighbor's car because he hates him. If it were just you, you would not do it, but because he is your friend, you let him do it. Williams draws the notion of negative responsibility in an example like this stating that "if I am ever responsible for anything, then I must be just as much responsible for things that I allow or fail to prevent"³. The consequence of this moral situation is pretty bad and was something you could have prevented. The things an agent could be negatively responsible for are things that the agent should reason through so he or she can produce the best state of affairs.

The notion of negative responsibility that Williams draws becomes resourceful in understanding how utilitarianism alienate agents from their own projects in moral situations. More importantly, it will demonstrate how utilitarianism undermines agents'

³ Williams, "Negative responsibility," 95.

integrity towards their own projects. To begin with, utilitarianism forbids any choice of action that is contrary to acting on its prescribed choice of action for a moral situation. This means agents are required to dispense their own projects if they are contrary the prescribed choice of action utilitarianism dictates. Williams shares an example of Jim who is an honored visitor in a small South American town and sees twenty Indians tied up against a wall for protesting against the government. Pedro, a captain, insists that Jim shoot one to spare the rest or else he will shoot them all. Under utilitarianism Jim should shoot one Indian to save the others. He will satisfy nineteen desires to stay alive and having only one dead Indian is better than having twenty dead. However, suppose Jim supports human rights and does research in this field. Shooting the Indian is conflicting for Jim because killing an Indian alienates him from his own project. He has to act against his project when he does not want to. He would rather not shoot an Indian.

Despite Jim's opposition to having to kill an Indian to maximize the most benefit for and satisfaction among the surviving Indians, the principle of impartiality applies in utilitarianism requiring Jim not to act biasedly. The principle claims that "there can be no relevant difference from a moral point of view which consists just in the fact...that benefits or harms accrue to one person rather than to another – 'it's me' can never in itself be a morally comprehensible reason"⁴. That fact that Jim's project is to support human rights and is in a moral situation where he will have to violate an Indian's human rights is not a reason for not acting on utilitarianism's prescribed choice of action. He cannot act biasedly in favor of what he wants to do because he does not want to accrue the personal harm of killing someone. And the fact that Pedro intervened by casing the

⁴ Williams, "Negative responsibility," 96.

moral situation Jim is in is also not a reason not to act accordingly. Jim has to kill the one Indian.

Consider one more example before straightforwardly applying the notion of negative responsibility to demonstrate the problem of alienation and an undermined integrity. George is conflicted with taking a job that requires him to pursue research in chemical and biological warfare. He says he is opposed to chemical and biological warfare and he does not want to act against his project in dissenting chemical and biological warfare. However, if he does not take the job then it will go to someone else who is more than eager to do the job. This person would really contribute to expanding research in chemical and biological warfare and advance weaponry for this kind of warfare. Either George takes the well-paying job or he keeps his word and someone more eager than him takes the job, thus, threatening the peace of the future. Refusing the job will also not end the familial and financial strain George is in. The prescribed choice of action in this case is to take the job. George cannot act biasedly in favor of his own project when the utilitarian dictation is to maximize happiness, benefit, or satisfaction. He can have a job to help out with his situation and he prevent someone more eager than him from getting the job to do more bad than good.

Both examples demonstrate that Jim and George have to dispense their own projects. If it were up to them to decide what to do, Jim would not have killed the Indian and George would have continued job searching. In this case, Jim would have been negatively responsible for letting all of the Indians die when he was in a position to prevent their deaths and George would have been negatively responsible for not taking the job when he was in a position to end the familial and financial strain he was in. The

fact that Jim could have prevented the death of twenty Indians is something he has to consider when he deliberates a choice of action, and the same concept applies in George's moral situation; but nevertheless, they do not want to detach from their own project and become alienated from them. There are feelings and values they associate with their projects that affect how they want to act in the moral situations they are in.

At the same time though it is morally significant to prevent twenty deaths and someone else who is eager about research in chemical and biological warfare. This requires dispensing one's own projects to act on the prescribed choice of actions that overcome the implications of being negatively responsible for not killing an Indian and for not taking the job. To any agent this entails becoming alienated from one's own project and even worse this entails getting one's own integrity toward their project undermined. Jim's integrity towards human rights and George's integrity to his own word get undermined by acting on their prescribed choice of actions. Despite utilitarianism maintaining that acting on the prescribed choice of actions are the obvious and right choices, they are problematic to act on because agents cannot relate their integrity to their projects⁵. Hence, Williams says that "utilitarianism cannot understand integrity" because it "cannot coherently describe the relations between a man's projects and his actions"⁶. His integrity objection against utilitarianism highlights a major problem agents face if they cannot act on their projects and pursue them to lengthy extents.

⁵ Williams, "Negative responsibility," 99.

⁶ Williams, "Negative responsibility," 100.

What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?

What makes a moral theory too demanding is that it is unacceptable for a moral theory to detach agents from their aspirations of who they want to be. Utilitarianism dictates which prescribed choices of actions agents should act on and requires agents to dispense their own projects to act accordingly. Williams has shown that dispensation causes the problem of alienation and, as a result, agents get their integrity towards their projects undermined. Agents wind up acting in ways that are contrary to how they would have acted if they based their actions off the projects they subscribe to. The demandingness of utilitarianism appears when agents are acting on prescribed choices of actions that do not express who they are and who they want to be. Agents prefer consulting with the feelings and values they associate with their projects and exercising their integrity towards their projects because doing so ensures that they can protect their integrity towards their projects. More importantly, doing so engages them to act on their projects.

It is important to note that Williams is interested in allowing agents to act on identity-related projects whether or not they produce some overall good. All that matters is that the projects themselves and the actions they take to act on them express who they are and who they want to be. Being able to do so connects them to their own person because they can express their identity, exercise their autonomy, and act on their values. If a dad's project is to be the best father figure to his newborn daughter, then by all means he is free to do so and act in the whatever ways that will express who he aspires to be. In any case, to further depict what makes a moral theory too demanding based off this example, suppose that utilitarianism dictates he needs to help his local church run this

month's food drive for homeless people every evening. The amount of happiness, benefit, and satisfaction is enormous compared to the utility from being the best father figure he could be to his newborn daughter. The dad is unable to protect and exercise his integrity towards his project. Without being able to express whom he aspires to be, it is evident he is unable to connect with who he wants his person to be. It is unacceptable for agents to have to become detached from their aspirations of who they want to be just so they can maximize happiness, benefit, and satisfaction. This is what makes a moral theory too demanding.

2.2 Scheffler: *The Agent-Centred Prerogative*

Williams previously argued that as agents acted on morally significant projects, their dispensation of their own projects alienated them from their projects. As a result, their alienation undermined their integrity towards their projects. The lack of devotion to one's own projects is concerning because these are projects that are personally significant and projects agents prefer to act on. Scheffler argues differently than Williams claiming that as agents act on their projects in strict proportion to their impersonal value, they fail to assign greater weight to their own projects. Thus, acting according to principle of strict proportionality is what alienates agents from their own projects. In order to overcome the problem of alienation as Scheffler describes it, he favors agents being able to assign greater weight to their own projects so they will not have to only focus on morally significant projects. This way agents can act on their projects out of proportion of their impersonal value.

To begin showing how agents become alienated from their own projects, consider that there is a discrepancy between their concerns and commitments being generated “independently of the weight of those concerns in an impersonal ranking of state of affairs.” An agent recognizes that his own concerns are significant from a personal standpoint but they are less significant from an impersonal standpoint. There are other concerns he can undertake as morally significant projects to maximize the overall good. The agent must allocate energy and resources to the projects “he cares most about *in strict proportion* to the value from an impersonal standpoint of his doing so”⁷. When

⁷ Samuel Scheffler, “The Project and its Motivation,” in *The Rejection of Consequentialism* (Oxford University Press: 1994), 9.

there are other projects that are more morally significant compared to one's own projects, then according to the principle of strict proportionality the agent should dispense his own projects.

If it is between choosing to buy a pair of shoes for your nephew and using that money to buy ten meals for ten homeless people, then you must not buy the shoes and help the homeless. More people will benefit from an essential good. Despite the overall good produced though, there is a sense that buying the homeless meals alienated you from your own project in doing your nephew good thusly undermining your integrity towards that project. Buying your nephew shoes was personally significant to you but it was not morally significant from an impersonal standpoint. Your project in buying your nephew shoes had to be dispensed in order to fulfill a morally significant project. Furthermore, this shows that acting according to the principle of strict proportionality is specifically what alienates agents from their own projects. It is not as simple as agents dispensing their own projects, as Williams argues, that alienates agents from their projects.

In order to prevent consequentialism from causing the problem of alienation, it must accommodate agents' interests in their projects. This is why Scheffler introduces an agent-centred prerogative. The prerogative alters how agents act in strict proportion to the impersonal value of their projects to acting out of proportion to the impersonal value of their projects. The alteration changes how agents act on things that are morally significant from an impersonal standpoint to acting on things that are personally significant from a

personal standpoint⁸. Under the agent-centred prerogative you would be able assign greater weight to possibly buying your nephew shoes. But what does it mean to assign greater weight to a project? How is it plausible?

In order to understand the prerogative's plausibility, it is important to understand two desiderata the prerogative meets. The prerogative supports a (i) coherent integration of the agent's values and actions into a unified personality and (ii) an appropriate limit on the agent's responsibility to his projects⁹. To explain the first desiderata, since agents are afforded greater weight to their own projects, they are able to apply their values towards their projects and act on those values through their projects. They can bridge a relation between their values and actions through their project which allows them to coherently integrate the relation into their personalities. For example, being able to practice guitar for four hours a day because you value making music as an art form allows you to relate that value with the action, and the relation between both really expresses who you are as they integrate coherently into your personality. If you were to value making music as an art form but only practice twenty minutes a day (the ideal being four hours a day), then the relation between value and action are not well connected and do not really express who you are or who you want to be.

But what if you valued hitting people with a bamboo stick for satisfaction and did it? What good is the prerogative if it seems to also allow agents to espouse harmful values and act on those values? The second desiderata places an appropriate limit on an agent's responsibility to his projects. That is, the agent cannot have zero responsibility

⁸ Samuel Scheffler, "Outline of a New Theory of Normative Ethics," in *The Rejection of Consequentialism* (Oxford University Press: 1994), 18.

⁹ Scheffler, "Outline of a New Theory," 19.

when he devotes himself to his projects. The danger in the agent having zero responsibility with his projects is that he may take extreme advantage of whacking people with a bamboo stick because he values the satisfaction from it and can only realize that value by hitting people. Instead, the agent is responsible to a minimal but significant extent for which values he applies towards his projects and how he acts on those values through his projects. Scheffler suggests that the agent should make sure that the inferiority of his own project “to each superior outcome he could pursue instead” must not exceed “the degree of sacrifice necessary for him to promote the superior outcome”¹⁰. If you could buy ten meals for ten homeless people but you wish to harm homeless people for an hour, you must buy the ten meals. Harming homeless people for an hour is more sacrificial than the overall good you could produce. A limit on sacrifice to whatever project you want to devote more time and energy to places an appropriate limit on an agent’s responsibility to what projects he wants devote himself to. The second desiderata prevents agent’s projects from radicalizing for the worst.

Because the prerogative meets both desiderata, agents are permitted to assign greater weight to their projects by devoting more time and energy to them; however, assigning greater weight to one’s own projects does not necessarily entail they can pursue them. The prerogative does not require agents to devote themselves to their projects. The prerogative just makes it permissible to sometimes decline to always produce the overall good so this way agents can devote more time and energy to their projects. Assigning greater weight to one’s own projects on these terms redresses the problem of alienation

¹⁰ Scheffler, “Outline of a New Theory,” 20.

because, again, agents can decline having to always produce the overall good. They do not have to dispense their projects and their personal significance to them. Nonetheless, if agents believe their projects are to produce the overall good, they are not prohibited from doing so¹¹. By contrast, consequentialism alone makes it impermissible to decline producing the overall good. Agents have to always do so. This is why the prerogative is appealing, because agents can decline to always produce the overall good, assign greater weight to their projects, and qualify to produce the overall good in a way that does not alienate them from their own projects.

What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?

A moral theory is too demanding if it prevents agents from realizing a greater role for their own person that goes beyond only producing the overall good. Under consequentialism agents are required to always produce the overall good which requires them to always act on morally significant projects to do so. Agents can only act on their own projects in strict proportion to their impersonal value and because their projects lack value from an impersonal standpoint, they are forced to dispense or subordinate their projects to morally significant projects. The inability of agents to act on their own projects confines the role of their own person to only producing the overall good. Because agents are confined to only acting on morally significant projects, agents cannot realize a greater role for their own person that goes beyond only producing the overall good. The potential of realizing a greater role for one's own person that goes beyond only producing the overall good lies in being able to act on one's own projects.

¹¹ Scheffler, "Outline of a New Theory," 22.

To explain, Scheffler's prerogative affords agents greater weight on their own projects which in turn allows them to exercise a greater role that goes beyond only producing the overall good. It is important to keep in mind that as agents assign greater weight to their own projects, the projects they assign more weight are not only identity-related projects. Based off Williams' argument, the demandingness of a moral theory is too much when agents become detached from who they aspire to be. This suggests that agents want to assign more weight to the projects that express their identity, who they are and who they want to be; but based off Scheffler's prerogative, agents can assign greater weight to identity-related projects and non-identity-related projects. Non-identity-related projects consist in interests to do things you want to like buying your nephew shoes, practicing guitar, or playing video games. While the role of an agent's own person contributes to producing the overall good, the prerogative warrants a role greater to contributing to oneself as well by permitting agents to act on identity- and non-identity-related projects.

Even though Scheffler and Williams have different arguments that entail different views of what makes a moral theory too demanding, their views nonetheless intersect on the subject of agents being unable to express their identities and therefore connect to their own persons. That is, because morality requires agents to dispense their projects, they become alienated from the very projects and potential actions that express their identity. Both Scheffler and Williams subscribe to this view, but because Scheffler also considers non-identity-related projects, he would raise that agents are also alienated from their interests to their ideal ways of living. Practicing guitar or playing video, for instance, are one's own interests to ways of live. Therefore, when the prerogative

warrants agents a greater role beyond only producing the overall good to contributing to oneself as well, they are in fact contributing to both their identity and their interests to ways of living. Identity-related projects allow agents to contribute to their identity and non-identity-related projects allow agents to contribute to their interests to ways of living. However, without the prerogative in effect, the demandingness of consequentialism prevents agents from realizing a greater role for their person that goes beyond only producing the overall good. It prevents agents from realizing how they can contribute to their own identities and interests to ways of living.

2.3 Murphy: Change in Compliance and the Cooperative Principle

It is in everyone's interest to be helped whenever they are in need and the best outcome results when everyone needed to contribute to furthering people's interests are responsive. Although every agent has to fulfill their share of demands to effectively respond to the needs of others, not everyone fulfills their share of demands. It is essential to always produce the overall good but without everyone's full compliance to this aim, producing the overall good seems more challenging to do. Indeed it is challenging to those who continue to produce the overall good. They have to act on the unfulfilled share of demands in addition to their own to produce the best outcome possible. When there is a humanitarian relief effort and some of the volunteers stop working, those who continue to work have to work harder for the best results. Liam Murphy argues that compliant agents should not have to acquire an excess of demands and fulfill them to produce the best outcome. They should only have to fulfill their own share regardless of a change in compliance. After running through two principles that sustain the problem Murphy is concerned about, he finally settles on the one that does not require agents to acquire an excess of demands.

(It is important to note that all three principles that will be explained are all derivative from the principle of beneficence. In the introduction I said that the principle of beneficence basically states that people should be concerned for others and further their interests when necessary to do so. Because they are all derivative from the principle of beneficence, they will correspond to the principle of beneficence on their own terms and conditions.)

The Simple Principle is the first principle that poses the problem Murphy wants to resolve. The Simple Principle is the “simplest principle of beneficence require[ing] each person to perform the action, of those available to her, that will make the outcome best;” it “is equivalent to consequentialism”¹². While every agent is expected to fulfill their share of demands to produce the best outcome, some will not, and those who continue to comply with the Simple Principle accordingly have to expend extra resources and energies to produce the best outcome possible. For instance, if a group of villagers are supposed to aid a nearby village that was wrecked by a huge wind storm but only three-fifths of all helpers went, then those who go help are burdened with an excess of demands. They will each have to carry more repair equipment, expend more energy carrying the equipment and working all day long, and face a greater risk of injury during construction. Full compliance from the villagers would have leveled the amount of demands for everyone more evenly; but nonetheless, the situation compliant agents are in forces them to expend themselves more to produce the best outcome that full compliance by everyone would have produced.

The Limited Principle is the other principle that poses the problem Murphy is concerned about. The Limited Principle is a combination of the Scheffler’s agent-centred prerogative and the Simple Principle. Recall that Scheffler’s prerogative allows agents to assign greater weight to their own projects and to act on those projects out of proportion to their impersonal value. Murphy says that “I can multiply the value of my own interests by some factor when assessing what I am required to do...the greater the multiplying

¹² Liam B. Murphy, “The Demands of Beneficence.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 268.

factor, the less will be demanded of me”¹³. The factor Murphy refers to can possibly be the rate at which an increase in demands to fulfill warrants an increase in the value of one’s own interests. By increasing the value of one’s own interests, agents essentially create their own limit as to what level of demands they are willing to fulfill before they much rather act on their own projects. Nonetheless, the exercising the Limited Principle as described is not plausible with a change in compliance in moral situations. The absolute need to fulfill one’s own share of demands while there is a change in compliance renders people who increase value to their own interests as too self-interested.

Take for instance a college student Sara who is a volunteer tutor for other students and wants to assign greater weight in bonding with her friends outside of tutoring. She can assign greater weight to the point where she is just going to out with her friends on the same evening she is expected to tutor. If there are other tutors available during the evening session then this is not a problem. However, consider the following point before even considering a change in compliance in this situation. A problem begins to emerge. Although under Scheffler’s prerogative Sara is allowed to sometimes decline producing the overall good, her decline now burdens other tutors with an excess of demands to fulfill during the session. Sara increased the value of bonding with her friends too high and to others who now have an excess of demands Sara is too self-interested. And the same concept can apply in other situations that are more cause-worthy like a humanitarian relief effort. Deciding not to work during such an effort because of some other interest in mind displays too much self-interest.

¹³ Murphy, “The Demands of Beneficence,” 275.

Now consider a change in the number of tutors available during the evening Sara is supposed to tutor (assume the other tutors have valid excuses to not being present). Instead of there being five tutors as usual, there are now Sara and two others. Sara and the two others have an excess of demands to fulfill and Sara should definitely not increase the value of her interest to go bond with her friends. It will only burden the other two with more demands to fulfill. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable for Sara to increase the value of her own interest because with an increase of demands imposed on her, she should be able to assign greater weight to her own project to even out the burden on her. Even better, Sara should be able to assign greater weight to her project to draw the limit as to how much she is willing to do before she much rather go do what she is interested in. The problem with this rationale though is that Sara then becomes too self-interested in light of the fact that she has her own original share of demands she needs to fulfill as well. It is unfortunate she has to acquire an excess of demands and fulfill them but now she becomes part of the ongoing problem where not doing her part makes others do more.

Certainly the Limited Principle can allow agents to create their own limits as to what level of demands they are willing to take on before they much rather act on their own projects, but it does not accommodate changes in compliance. Even if the two tutors who were absent returned to the session somehow, Sara still should not assign greater weight to her own project. She will be too self-interested and becomes part of the problem Murphy is concerned about. The Limited Principle is self-defeating for it is not flexible enough to accommodate changes in compliance.

Both principles explained so far are not suited to prevent agents from acquiring an excess of demands to fulfill in particular because they fail to meet the Compliance

Condition. The Compliance Condition “demand[s] the same of agents under partial compliance as under full compliance”¹⁴. It is a prerequisite for any principle to prevent agents from acquiring an excess of demands. Whether it is the village wreck example or the tutoring scenario with Sara, neither principle met the Compliance Condition. Both cases showed that agents who continued to do their part during partial compliance had to do more. Although it was emphasized more with the Limited Principle, both the Simple and Limited Principle cannot accommodate changes in compliance. Accommodating changes in compliance means the difference in meeting the Compliance Condition from not meeting it. Meeting the Compliance Condition ensures a fair distribution of demands whether or not a compliant agent is in full or partial compliance. Because the Simple and Limited Principle fail to meet the Compliance Condition, they fail to distribute fair shares of demands.

An effective way of meeting the Compliance Condition is for agents to develop a relation to one another. Under the Simple and Limited principle, agents tend to fulfill their share of demands on an individual basis without any relation to other agents. The alternative is for agents to fulfill their share of demands on a collective basis with a relation to each other. If an aid agency expected everyone to do their part without a meeting to make sure everyone did their part right, it is possible for some to not have done all that they are supposed to for the best results. But if the aid agency expected everyone to do their part *together* and convene, then the best outcome is expected because everyone can hold each other accountable for doing their part. A relation among

¹⁴ Murphy, “The Demands of Beneficence,” 279.

all agents is vital in making sure everyone does their part for the sake of togetherness and to esteem the point in fulfilling one's own share of demands.

Agents who fulfill their share of demands on a collective basis with a relation to each other are undertaking a "collective project" to produce the best outcome. A collective project connects agents in relation to each other because agents would be aiming to promote the good *together*. Outcomes are more successful when everyone is connected in aiming to produce the best outcome together. Producing the best outcome together becomes everyone's morality and everyone is able to understand that morality is making the same demand on everyone. Even if there is a change in compliance, the agents still responsive can agree that they should not have to exceed their fair share of demands. By contrast, fulfilling demands on an individual basis without a relation to other agents affects agents so they do not feel moved by the rightness of their actions¹⁵. They undertake fulfilling their share of demands as an individual project without the help of others despite others having the same level of demands. There is no sense of accountability among the agents and they become withdrawn from producing the best outcome.

Hence, Murphy introduces the Cooperative Principle. The Cooperative Principle "does not *prohibit* agents in situations of partial compliance from sacrificing as much as would be optimal in those circumstances...it only *requires* as much sacrifice as would be optimal under full compliance"¹⁶. The Cooperative Principle meets the Compliance Condition because even if there are changes in compliance in some situation, the agents

¹⁵ Murphy, "The Demands of Beneficence," 279.

¹⁶ Murphy, "The Demands of Beneficence," 280.

responsive to the situation only have to do their fair shares of demands. Their relation to one another allows them to agree on doing only their share. And there are ways to realize the Cooperative Principle. There can be agents in full compliance responding a petition that needs 200 signatures. If 200 agents sign then the aim is achieved in full compliance. There may be agents in partial compliance responding to a humanitarian relief effort such that there were more people who wanted to help but additional help was unnecessary. The noncompliance of those who could not help, however, does not entail that they need to make up for their lack of contribution somehow. They simply do their fair share next time¹⁷. The Cooperative Principle dissents acting on demands that exceed the fair share, although it is allowed, and thus, it meets the Compliance Condition.

The Cooperative Principle can accommodate changes in compliance, but it does not solve the issue of partial compliance. Partial compliance is still possible. Nevertheless, addressing partial compliance was never the problem at hand. Preventing agents from acquiring an excess of demands was the problem at hand. The Cooperative Principle “dissolves” agents’ excess of demands by orienting them to aim to produce the best outcome in relation to each other. As they commit to their own fair shares of demands, they ultimately avoid acquiring excess demands while producing some good.

What Makes a Moral Theory Too Demanding?

What makes a moral theory too demanding is that it is unfair for a moral theory to require agents to acquire an excess of demands because others do not do their part. In a moral situation where there is full compliance among all agents, everyone has a share of demands they have to fulfill. Everyone is responsible for their share of demands and

¹⁷ Murphy, “The Demands of Beneficence,” 286.

should be for their share only. However, when there is partial compliance, the agents who continue fulfilling their share of demands have to acquire an excess of demands to produce the best outcome possible. The demandingness of a moral theory is seen with compliant agents acting on their share and an extra share of demands that originally they were not responsible for. The burden of extra demands compliant agents have relative to noncompliant agents who have none is evidence of an unfair accommodation compliant agents had to make. Further, the accommodation is unfair too because compliant agents are unable to be only independently responsible for their own share of demands; rather, they have to also be responsible for the lack of responsibility other agents display with their own share of demands. It is something compliant agents do not want to be willing to do all of the time. Not only is having to acquire an excess of demands burdensome but so is having to be unwillingly responsible for other people's share of demands. A moral theory is too demanding when agents have to make an unfair accommodation as such.

To add, Murphy does not seem to express much concern for agents not being able to express their identity, exercise their autonomy, or formulate their values. He only explicates concern for agents unfairly having to acquire an excess of demands because others do not do their part. Nevertheless, the implication of his concern stretches to how suppressed an agent's own person must be to comply with the demand of having to acquire an excess of demands. The demanding burden of having to acquire an excess of demands because others do not do their part must deter an agent's ability to express their identity, exercise their autonomy, and formulate their own values. Although Murphy does not seem to express much concern about this, it is worth noting to really depict how conflicting it is to have to acquire and excess of demands.

2.4 Miller: *The Principle of Sympathy and Personal Policies*

Recall Singer's Principle of Sacrifice from the introduction where people must sacrifice their resources and energies without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance in order to effectively respond to the needs of others. Although Miller understands Singer's sentiment in condemning inaction and inadequate action when responding to people's needs, he claims that Singer's argument for maximal sacrifice is too radical and misconstrues ordinary morality¹⁸. Singer does not take into consideration the very basic features of human life that contribute to its wellbeing, namely, special relationships people have with others, partiality towards special relatives, personal histories, and one's own circumstances¹⁹. These are all things people naturally think about that conflict with the level of sacrifice Singer expects from them. The Principle of Sacrifice imposes a significant risk of worsening people's lives because they are expected to neglect the very things that build and support their wellbeing. This is why Miller offers a new approach to responding to people's needs that takes into consideration the very things that contribute to a person's wellbeing. By doing so, he argues in favor of alleviating the level of sacrifice agents should exert when responding to people's needs so they are not in a significant risk of worsening their lives when they respond to people's needs.

Miller introduces the Principle of Sympathy which states: "One's underlying disposition to respond to neediness as such ought to be sufficiently demanding that giving

¹⁸ Richard W. Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance." *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. (Blackwell Publishing, Inc., 2004), 358.

¹⁹ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 383.

which would express greater underlying concern would impose a significant risk of worsening one's life, if one fulfilled all further responsibilities; and it need not be any more demanding than this" (the Principle of Sympathy is also a derivative from the principle of beneficence which will correspond to it on its own terms and conditions)²⁰.

In order to be dispositioned to respond to neediness, one must have a basic concern for people's needs to sympathize with those people in need. This way agents can effectively respond to people's needs because they sympathize with those needs. It is important to understand though that all agents develop and have distinct basic concerns that they ascribe to be important to them. Sarah can be concerned about world hunger, Jimmy about world poverty, and Pape about free school lunches. Everyone sympathizes with different needs people have but still they will all express the same underlying responsiveness to neediness. In other words, everyone will respond to neediness but through their own sets of "personal policies"²¹. With an array of things to sympathize with, agents have unique personal policies guiding them towards what causes they want to respond to and what form of aid they will direct towards those causes.

Take for example two women. One is religious and the other is a lawyer. The religious lady may want to donate to her church to help her church stay open for her community and the lawyer may want to donate money to fund a debate team for students who want to be lawyers in the future. They each have their own basic concerns, sympathize with different kinds of neediness, and have different personal policies guiding how they will respond. The religious lady responds to her community by donating to her

²⁰ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 359.

²¹ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 360.

church and the lawyer responds to ambitious lawyers by funding a club, and both need to only respond until too much sacrifice puts their lives in significant risk of being worse off. That is, if both these women value their relationships with their kids, they should not have to donate so much that they cannot take their kids on an excursion. Their relationships to their kids contribute to the wellbeing of their lives. The Principle of Sacrifice, however, would dictate that taking one's own kids out is not of comparable moral importance compared to donating sums of money to end world hunger. It would completely overlook what contributes to these women's wellbeing. The aim of the Principle of Sympathy is ultimately the same as the Principle of Sacrifice but, again, different from it in that it takes into consideration the things that contribute to a person's wellbeing. More on the latter point will be visited throughout this discussion.

Consider a different scenario where the religious lady buys a raffle ticket for some prize while the rest of the money goes to the church and the lawyer invests her money for financial security for her family. If the Principle of Sacrifice were in effect, both these women would not be responding to the correct needs and should be responding to larger world problems. Further, the Principle of Sacrifice would consider that these personal policies are pursuing exorbitant goals because they involve some degree of self-interest. Nonetheless, the Principle of Sympathy considers that since the religious lady is still responding to her community and her religion is her identity, her buying a raffle ticket is acceptable; and since the lawyer is responding to her family's security and relates a lot with her family, investing her money to respond to her family's future security is acceptable. Both these women are still responding to some need with respect to things that contribute to their wellbeing. However, if all they sought was purely to contribute to

their wellbeing by buying lottery tickets, then this would be a personal policy with no response to any need, pursuing only an exorbitant goal²². Exorbitant goals must not be so excessive that they interfere with the purpose of a personal policy in responding to the needs of others.

Considering all, agents can ascribe their personal policies to all the things they are concerned about without having to forfeit all the things that contribute to the wellbeing of their lives. This is a good measure in preventing agents from putting their lives in significant risk of being worse off. In addition, agents can ascribe their personal policies to low scale concerns versus having to only ascribe to large scale concerns like poverty, hungry, humanitarian relief, etc. They can respond to needs very immediate to them like their family or own community instead of having to stretch their beneficence very far. The Principle of Sympathy affords agents a sense of autonomy in what they can be concerned about as it affords and how they can be concerned about while entitling them the wellbeing of their own lives. By contrast, the Principle of Sacrifice restricts agents' autonomy and does not even consider all the fundamental features of human life that contributes to its wellbeing.

Now that it is clear what the Principle of Sympathy is, it will be helpful to go in depth with how the principle withstands complicated eventual circumstances that seem to really put agents in significant risk of worsening their lives. To begin with, do agents have to do more when unexpected circumstances arise, for example, from a natural disaster that harms a population of people? Miller says there is a "commitment to sacrifice within a normally expected range in response to normally expected

²² Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 363.

opportunities to protect from peril and a commitment to greater sacrifice in connection with circumstances of extreme peril that are not expected normally to occur”²³. If someone already sympathizes with people’s need for food before a hurricane, the occurrence of a natural disaster can only intensify the urge to respond to those people in need. It is expected for agents to commit even more to their basic concern for these people in need considering that the circumstances require it. Because agents are already concerned to helping people in need of food, they can compromise with setting a higher point before any greater response to neediness significantly risks their lives being worse off.

Supposing the religious lady also sympathizes with people in need of food, she will likely stop donating to her church or donate way less to her church and donate more to humanitarian relief efforts. Her personal policy’s ascription to people in need of food and the extremity of a large population in need determine she should respond a lot more to the people in need, and the same concept applies to the lawyer assuming she also sympathizes with people in need of food.

Both these women need to only respond until the responding more puts their lives in significant risk of being worse off. That is, until they are at risk of forfeiting something that really contributes to the wellbeing of their lives. The only difference between the religious lady’s response and the lawyer’s response is that the lawyer can respond to people’s need of food more than the religious lady just because her occupation affords her a greater capacity to do so. This does not mean that the religious lady’s personal policy is inferior to the lawyer’s. Her personal policy can only adapt so much to

²³ Miller, “Beneficence, Duty and Distance,” 365.

unexpected circumstances due to her own circumstances. She probably has the same level of concern for the people in need that the lawyer has. But what if she had a lesser basic concern to people in need of food? Does that make her personal policy inferior to the other? The answer is no.

Miller claims that although it is possible for an agent to be equally respectful of people who are in need, that is, appreciating an equal worth of everyone's life, it does not entail being equally concerned for those people²⁴. Without an equal concern for those one equally respects, an agent cannot respond to them all in the same way. For instance, a father may appreciate the equal worth his daughter and a homeless man thereby being equally respectful of both people, but he may be more concerned for the wellbeing of his daughter than the homeless man. The father will likely lend himself to his daughter than the homeless if both ever needed help with something at the same time. Ordinary moral thinking maintains "a choice is wrong if and only if it could not be made under the circumstances by someone displaying equal respect for all persons; equivalently, a choice is wrong if and only if it is incompatible with the ascription of equal worth to everyone's life"²⁵. However, partiality is a factor evident in special relationships like father and daughter that is not evident in a relationship between a father and homeless man. The father is not wrong for having a special relationship with his daughter, so he cannot be wrong for only helping his daughter despite having equal respect for both.

To elaborate, partiality evident in special relationships does not pose a problem to the Principle of Sympathy. The Principle of Sympathy validates its contribution to overall

²⁴ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 367.

²⁵ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 366.

good²⁶. If the father's daughter and the homeless man were inside a burning shop and only one person could be rescued by the father, the father will likely rescue his daughter. Despite placing an equal worth on both of their lives, he cannot be wrong to rescuing his daughter. Her rescue contributes to her wellbeing as well as his. His rescue prevents her death and prevents him from significantly worsening his own wellbeing by losing her. If he rescued the homeless man, he would not be wrong for not rescuing his daughter because he saves someone, but he worsens his daughter's wellbeing and his own by losing his daughter. Partiality would be only be morally unacceptable if the agent's own life was not at risk of being significantly worse off or if the agent's actions were out of self-interest²⁷.

So far the Principle of Sympathy has been applied when unexpected circumstances arise and in special relationships. Now it will be applied when agents are in proximity to a nearby moral situation. Miller illustrates that a man is in a rush to catch his flight for a conference for his last chance to become a professor but a baby is drowning in a pond. The man either does not put his life in significant risk of being worse off or he rescues the baby. Ultimately he rescues the baby. The situation is a life-versus-death situation whereas the other previous cases have dealt with merely helping those in need or preventing some bad from happening. The costs of not responding to the situation are greater than the man being worse off. Either someone's life is sacrificed or the man sacrifices his life being worse off. The man had to save the baby. It would too great of sacrifice on his part if he let the baby die. He had to accept the fact that the small chances

²⁶ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 367.

²⁷ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 369.

of a baby drowning during a commitment of his own prevailed²⁸. If he were the one drowning he would very much benefit from someone sacrificing their life being worse off than sacrificing his life away.

In sum, Miller's Principle of Sympathy alleviates the amount of sacrifice agents exert when they respond to the needs of others. It is a favorable principle from Singer's Principle of Sacrifice. The Principle of Sympathy accommodates the wellbeing of agents' lives by making sure that that responding to neediness does not worsen their lives by significant margins. Agents can undertake their own personal policies to respond to others, ascribe to what they most sympathize with, and be well-protected from overly demanding efforts that worsen their lives. At large, the Principle of Sympathy enables agents to be flexible in responding to various kinds of neediness by letting them do the right thing nearly on their own terms.

What Makes a Theory Too Demanding?

What makes a moral theory too demanding is when a moral theory does not accommodate the most fundamental features that contribute to the wellbeing of a person's life. If it does not accommodate these features then it has no regard for and trumps the wellbeing of people's lives. Miller demonstrates this is the very issue with Singer's Principle of Sacrifice. When agents are acting according to the Principle of Sacrifice, they are constantly responding to serious needs with major moral implications. However, the Principle of Sacrifice does not take into consideration agents' special relationships with others, partiality towards special relatives, personal histories, and their own circumstances. These are the most fundamental features that not only contribute to

²⁸ Miller, "Beneficence, Duty and Distance," 379.

the wellbeing of people's lives but also constitute it. Neglecting these features misconstrues morality as Miller claims because neglecting these features demonstrates that morality confines the role of people's own person to only producing the overall good. Certainly agents have a greater role for their own person that goes beyond only producing the overall good.

What makes a moral theory too demanding for Miller touches base with what Scheffler believes makes a moral theory too demanding. Miller arrives at Scheffler's view through a different line of reasoning but arrives nonetheless, and this is worth noting because this intersection emphasizes why an agent's own person can be so confined to only producing the overall good. Neglecting the very features that contribute to and constitute the wellbeing of agents' lives misconstrues the concept of morality as such because indeed it forces agents to only produce the overall good without any regard to the wellbeing of their lives. The wellbeing of their lives becomes irrelevant when acting on morally significant projects, as long as they are acted on. A lack of regard for the wellbeing of one's own life essentially leads agents to become lost in morality without a sense of their own person. Without an accommodation to the most fundamental features that constitute the wellbeing of a person's life, the demandingness of a moral theory imposes a mechanical outlook on one's own life, a life meant only to produce the overall good. A failure to regard the wellbeing of a person's life entails a meaningless life from a person standpoint and one without its own person.

3. Morality's Domain of Beneficence and Our Person

The Demandingness of Morality on Our Person

In the previous chapter I evaluated all of the philosophers' arguments and discussed their respective views of what makes a moral theory too demanding. In this chapter I will connect their views together to draw differences and commonalities they have with each other's views. In doing so, there will be strengths and weaknesses to notice about each philosopher's argument in addressing the demandingness of morality. As I draw the connections between all of the philosophers' views of what makes a moral theory too demanding, I will use these differences and commonalities to ground a couple of claims that will leverage my argument of what makes a moral theory too demanding.

Murphy suggests that a moral theory is too demanding when it is unfair for agents to have to acquire an excess of demands because others do not fulfill their demands. Compared to Williams, Scheffler and Miller, Murphy's view is the most different compared to their suggestions of what makes a moral theory too demanding. Williams and Scheffler both subscribe to the view that because of alienation, agents cannot act on the projects to express their identities; and Scheffler and Miller both subscribe to the view that when agents cannot realize a greater role for their person that goes beyond only producing the overall good, they cannot contribute to their own identities. Even though Williams', Scheffler's, and Miller's views converge on the subject of identity, identity is not independently more important from the subjects of autonomy and values. They all go hand-in-hand and should not be disregarded as I only mention identity.

At any rate, Murphy expresses no real concern for agents being unable to express their identity, exercise their autonomy, or formulate their values. All he is concerned

about is compliant agents making unfair accommodations for noncompliant agents who do not fulfill their share of demands. In the discussion of what makes a moral theory too demanding for Murphy, it was included to deepen the analysis that Murphy's concern about unfair accommodations by compliant agents must insinuate an extended concern for suppressing agents' own persons. However, this is not his main concern. For this reason, we can ignore Murphy's view of what makes a moral theory too demanding for the remainder of this thesis. It will not contribute much to my argument to come. This is not to discredit Murphy's view at all, because it still answers what makes a moral theory too demanding, but it will not contribute much to my argument overall besides to my first claim.

My first claim I want to establish is that we all have lives that we are entitled to outside of morality's domain of beneficence. Murphy's view shows that when compliant agents make unfair accommodations by acquiring an excess of demands, they are forced to participate inside of morality's domain of beneficence. These unfair accommodations confine agents to morality's domain of beneficence and undermines people's entitlement to their own lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence. As I draw comparisons among Williams', Scheffler's, and Miller's views next, it will be conceivably understandable that you and I indeed do have lives we are entitled to outside of morality's domain of beneficence. After we agree to this claim, I will posit a second claim to help explain *why* we are entitled to our lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence.

To start with Williams' and Scheffler's views on what makes a moral theory too demanding, their views differ but their argumentative means in arriving at their own

views are agreeable. Williams and Scheffler both recognize that acting on morally significant projects alienates agents from their own projects and, in turn, their integrity towards their projects is undermined. Scheffler introduces the agent-centred prerogative so agents can assign greater weight to their projects and sometimes decline producing the overall good. Unlike Williams who only considers identity-related projects, Scheffler considers both identity-related and non-identity-related projects. In this case, the prerogative prevents agents from always being alienated from projects that contribute to both their identity and their interests to ways of living. Regardless of Scheffler's additional consideration for non-identity-related projects, Williams is only concerned about projects that contribute to expressing one's own identity.

And even though I am interested in claiming that people have lives they are entitled to outside of morality's domain of beneficence, I will also discount the relevance of acting on non-identity-related projects to establish this claim. To Williams' respect, I am only interested in considering projects that promote identity and not ways of living. Identity is intrinsically more tied to the idea of one's own person compared to one's interests to ways of living. The version of the person I have in mind is basic. It consists of one's own identity, autonomy, and values independent of any interests to our ways of living. Including our interests to our ways of living will only inflate the version of the person I have in mind and will not be necessary to claim we have lives we are entitled to outside of morality's domain of beneficence. A basic version of our person will adequately establish this claim.

To continue the comparison between Williams and Scheffler views of what makes a moral theory too demanding, Williams would also find that the prerogative does not

adequately connect agents to their aspirations of who they want to be. Williams challenged utilitarianism with his integrity objection because agents' integrity towards their projects was vulnerable to agents acting differently from what their own projects would have suggested. The prerogative does not permit agents to always act on their projects so they are unable to always express who they are and who they want to be. The prerogative only allows agents to consult with their integrity towards their projects, thereby assigning greater weight to their projects, and sometimes act on their projects. Because the prerogative does not always protect agents' integrity towards their projects by allowing them to always exercise it, it fails to connect them consistently to their aspirations of who they want to be.

Despite this inadequacy for Williams, Scheffler's prerogative taps into giving the problem of alienation a solution. So even though the prerogative is not entirely satisfactory to address Williams' view of what makes a moral theory too demanding, it makes some progress in approaching his view. Without having to be alienated from one's own projects all the time, the prerogative provides people possibilities to connect to one own aspirations of who one wants to be. As it relates to my claim, it provides people possibilities to live their lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence when they can express themselves through their projects from time to time. Without the prerogative, our entitlement to our lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence is certainly undermined.

Scheffler's prerogative draws another interesting comparison with Miller's personal policies. The comparison will also show that acting on non-identity-related projects are not to be concerned with and that people are entitled to their lives outside of

morality's domain of beneficence. Consider, again, both identity- and non-identity-related projects the prerogative affords greater weight to. Scheffler suggests that permitting agents to also contribute to their interests to ways of living helps them realize a greater role for their person that goes beyond only producing the overall good. An additional role in contributing to one's own interests to ways of living adds more to someone's life outside of morality's domain of beneficence than simply contributing to one's own identity would. This means that the role of someone's person outside only producing the overall good is greater if they can act on non-identity-related projects than merely acting on identity-related projects.

Despite the appeal in warranting agents the ability to act on identity- and non-identity-related projects, Miller would deny the necessity in affording agents greater weight to non-identity-related projects. Being able to contribute to one's own interests to ways of living is not one of the *most* fundamental features that contribute to the wellbeing of people's lives, let alone constitute it. Rather, contributing to one's own identity is one of the most fundamental features that contribute to the wellbeing of our lives. A plurality of identity-related projects encompass the most fundamental features that contribute to the wellbeing of our lives. Assessing the personal policies Miller affords agents can further settle why non-identity-related projects are not important to live one's own life outside of morality's domain of beneficence. Because agents ascribe their personal policies to concerns they find most important, they are ascribing their personal policies to projects and causes they find valuable. The value they attribute to the projects and causes they find most important allows them to compromise with the fact that their role is subject to producing the overall good. Take for example finding value in donating to

medical research on a weekly basis for a breast cancer cure. You can compromise with donating to medical research on a weekly basis for a breast cancer cure because of the value you attribute it. The value you attribute to some project allows you to compromise with your role in producing the overall good.

Even more, the fact agents are acting on projects and causes they value reflects that they are acting on projects and causes that express their identities, so while they are acting on a morally significant projects to produce the overall good they are also contributing to their own identity. Donating to medical research expresses you are a believer in the fight against breast cancer. To a considerable extent, Miller's personal policies address Scheffler's concern that a moral theory is too demanding when it prevents agents from realizing a greater role for their person that is confined to only producing the overall good. Agents ascribe their personal policies to projects and causes they value which subjects them to having a role they can compromise with in producing the overall good and still contribute to their own identity. Although agents who utilize personal policies are using their person to participate in morality's domain of beneficence, it is like they are not at the same time because they were never forced to and the projects and causes they are acting on is by choice. In a sense, agents are living outside of morality's domain of beneficence because they are acting on projects and causes they value anyway.

Based off the comparisons made so far, Williams and Miller seem to be the most identity-centric when assessing what makes a moral theory too demanding. Williams is interested in granting agents the ability to act on their projects to allow them to protect and exercise their integrity towards their projects so they can express who they are and

who they want to be. Miller is interested in affording agents personal policies so they can act on projects and causes they value, thereby expressing who they are and who they want to be. The difference between Williams' and Miller's interests, however, is that Williams' interest for agents to be able to act on their own projects is open to agents acting on both altruistic and non-altruistic projects while personal policies promote only altruistic projects²⁹. For example, if you won a \$500,000 lottery, do you save it to secure your kids' education and your family from financial insecurity in today's unpredictable times, or do you donate it to an orphanage because you value it and know they it will be able to take in double the orphans for the next five years. Whatever you do, you can identify as a family man who wants to provide or a beneficent orphan lover. From Williams' perspective your choice is open whereas from Miller's perspective your choice will be to donate the money because you find value in the orphanage.

Whether or not Williams subscribes entirely to Miller's support for personal policies depends if Williams believes that agents are entitled to both altruistic and non-altruistic projects. Although he never states, it seems that he would believe so for the purposes that including both project types entail more projects available to connect agents to their aspirations of who they want to be by acting on them (I will refer to this point later in my argument). To the same extent that Miller's personal policies provide a solution to the problem of alienation by orienting agents to act on altruistic projects must be the same extent to which Williams supports personal policies. And compared to

²⁹ I credit Professor Schroeder for this insight on Williams' position about altruistic and non-altruistic projects.

Scheffler's prerogative, Miller's personal policies are a better approach to Williams' concern for what makes a moral theory too demanding.

In sum, we can see that Miller's personal policies are the most unraveling to the demandingness of morality as he, Williams, and Scheffler see it. His identity-centric approach, respectively, accommodates the most fundamental features that contribute to the wellbeing a people's lives; offers a better way to connect agents to their aspirations of who they want to be; and allows agents to compromise their own person's role in producing the overall good while also going beyond it to contribute to their own identity. Most importantly, it is conceivably understandable that people have lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence they are entitled to. We can all agree to this based off the comparisons drawn between the philosophers' views of what makes a moral theory too demanding.

What is next is to explain *why* we are entitled to our lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence. The second claim I will posit soon will help explain why we are entitled to our lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence. But first, I want to remind you that the common denominators that make up our lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence are our identity, autonomy, and values, independent of our interests to our ways of living. Our person is the very body that encapsulates our identity, autonomy and values. With our ability to express our identity, exercise our autonomy, and formulate our own values, we can define and shape our own persons. With our own definitions and manners to shape our person outside of morality's domain of beneficence, we are able to live our lives the way we are entitled to.

But when Singer's advocacy for great sacrifice, or morality in general, require us to always act beneficently towards others, great demands are imposed on our person. They prohibit defining and shaping our person in the way we want to by deterring our ability to express our identity, exercise our autonomy, and formulate our values. In turn, the demandingness of morality restrains us from our lives outside of its domain of beneficence and from how we want our lives to be. All of the philosophers discussed frame this issue one way or another, and the issue puts us in a position to question a number of things. (1) What identity do we possibly have to identify ourselves with besides an identity of great moral beneficence; (2) what autonomy can we exercise to act in ways that distinguishes us from mechanically acting out of pure beneficence; and (3) what capacity do we have to formulate our own values that are not so tied to only concerns for humanity? These are big concerns the demandingness of morality incites in us because it confines our own person to its domain of beneficence.

It is natural for us to have serious levels of concerns for people in desperate need, but there is a certain point when an amount of sacrifice that adheres to the severity of our concerns is too great for us to bear. Many of us much rather be sympathetic than apathetic towards people's needs, so we cannot just choose to not be concerned about real world problems; but nonetheless, it becomes unfeasible for us to carry out the amount of sacrifice that adheres to our severe level of concerns. Our own person, our identity, autonomy and values, is so innate to us that it is hard for us to even risk forfeiting it for good in order to always produce the overall good. Nevertheless, the demandingness of morality constantly puts us in the position to forfeit our person.

We want to realize the full potential of our own person which is why we have a natural tendency to want to develop our identity, autonomy, and values on our own terms independently of morality. With regards to Williams, connecting to our aspirations of who we want to be is essential to developing our person. With consistency, we are bound to mature our person to be what we want it to be. Similarly, Miller affords agents personal policies that help agents develop their own person around the values they find important and identify with. Even Scheffler, considering identity-related projects only, would agree that extra devotion to these projects can guide us away from morality's domain of beneficence the way we want to. Only then do we have the possibility to develop our own person.

Moreover, when we have ownership and control over the development of our person, we are able to connect to our own person. Hence, my second claim: the relation between development of and connection to our person is precisely what is innate to our person. This relation between the development of and connection to our person is undoubtedly innate to us because we very capable of sustaining the relation to realize the full potential of our person. It is a relation we yearn to own and control. The demandingness of morality, however, interferes with our ownership and control over this relation because it forces us to accept a few things. For one, we are forced to accept that the role of our person belongs inside morality's domain of beneficence. Second, we are forced to accept that morality separates us from how we want to develop our own persons. And third, we are forced to accept that morality undervalues, disrespects, or simply does not understand our persons. These are all things that Williams', Scheffler's, and Miller's views of what makes a moral theory too demanding were concerned about.

Without ownership and control over the relation at stake here, we are bound to forfeit our identity, autonomy, and values in order to produce the overall good.

With full ownership and control over the development of our person, we can aim for projects that define and shape our person. For example, we can aim to act on sophisticated projects like expanding a field of literature through research, joining an activist organization that will fight for reforms in our country, and starting our own companies or nonprofits to improve people's way of life. We can also aim to act on trivial projects like becoming a motivational speaker, working towards becoming a famous musician, and being the best video-gamer. These are all an array of identity-related projects in their own way that can develop our person and allow us to connect to it.

Because of the plurality of projects we can aim for to develop our person, drawing one final comparison between Williams and Miller will support my second claim and help explain why we are entitled to lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence. There is a resemblance between sophisticated projects and altruistic projects because of the overall good produced for others and between trivial projects and non-altruistic projects because they benefit the agent more than others. With this in mind, Williams' position on acting on identity-related projects entails that we would be able to develop our person and connect to it through both sophisticated and trivial projects. Miller's position on acting on identity-related projects, however, entails that we would only be able to act on sophisticated projects. For Williams, producing overall good is not essential to acting on identity-related projects whereas it is with Miller and his personal policies. This distinction shows that William's position on acting on identity-related

projects yields a fuller expression of our identity, greater exercise of our autonomy, and a wider formulation of our own values. His interest maximizes the kind of person we can potentially develop outside of morality's domain of beneficence if we are afforded the privilege to act on any of our projects consistently.

People are very capable of developing their person through an array of identity-related projects; and the final comparison between Williams and Miller shows we are capable of developing our person to its full potential if we do not have to always produce the overall good. To Williams' advantage, allowing people to act on any of their identity-related projects maximizes the development of their person and thus connects them to their person in the best way possible. His position supports how innate the development of and connection to our person is. The potential that someone has to develop their person and connect to it outside of morality's domain of beneficence entitles them to live up to that potential. This is why we are entitled to our lives outside of morality's domain of beneficence. Miller falls short in allowing agents to maximize the development of their own person so they can connect to it in the best way possible. It is not bad if you value starting our own nonprofit to better people's way of life and if you can compromise with being subject to producing the overall good; however, Miller's personal policies fail to maximize the development of your person when there are trivial projects you are probably inclined to undertake as well.

What makes a moral theory too demanding is when a moral theory takes ownership and control over the potential development of and connection to our own person. The demandingness of morality dictates us away from who we can potentially become outside of its domain of beneficence, and as a result, we forfeit much of our

identity, autonomy, and values that could have been. We must be able to determine whom our person will be or what kind of purpose we want to bestow on it to become that person. Our determination as such should be independent of any moral requirements and conditions interfering with this relation. William's position best supports my view of what makes a moral theory too demanding because his position is not preoccupied with the need of undertaking identity-related projects to produce some overall good. As long as acting on the project connects us to our aspirations of who we want to be, then we are free to do so. The potential of our person – identity, autonomy, and values – is found beyond the demandingness of morality and in the projects that afford us the most ownership and control over the potential development of and connection to our person.

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